

## **Edwards Secures \$1.8 Million for TEEX Law Enforcement Training, Texas Forensic Science Academy, & Communications Technology Upgrades for Brazos County Sheriff's Dept. As Bill Passes House**

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Chet Edwards announced that he has secured funding that will help the Texas Engineering Extension Service train law enforcement personnel to respond in an emergency, improve forensic investigation, and upgrade the Brazos County Sheriff's Department communications technology. Edwards added the funding to the 2010 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill, which passed the House today.

Specifically, Edwards added \$1.3 million for the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERT) program at Texas A&M. This program, administered by the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) provides critical training for law enforcement officers, National Guard, Reserve and Active Duty service members who are the first to respond to acts of violence in our communities. Over 17,000 officers have engaged in this effective training since 2002 including many officers in the Brazos Valley and throughout Edwards' 17th district. In addition to the \$1.3 million added by Edwards to the 2010 bill, Edwards has secured \$1.2 million for ALERT since 2005.

"This vital homeland security program at Texas A&M plays an integral role in saving the lives of our citizens and our police officers as they respond to a wide array of dangerous law enforcement situations," said Edwards. "The training provided by ALERT will help law enforcement quickly respond to protect our communities in the event of a violent attack."

Edwards also secured \$300,000 for The Texas Forensic Science Academy, a joint effort of the Texas Engineering and Extension Service and Texas A&M University, which trains and educates Texas law enforcement professionals, prosecutors, public defenders and judges to promote proper crime scene investigation, evidence collection/preservation, courtroom presentation and application. The program aims to increase accuracy in the Texas legal system, increase arrests supported by clear and convincing evidence, and reduce mistrials and exonerations saving potentially millions in state tax dollars. No such comprehensive training program currently exists in the nation.

"The goal of training provided by the Texas Forensic Science Academy is to help strengthen the Texas criminal justice system by promoting comprehensive forensic investigations," said Edwards.

Peter M. Scheets, Deputy Chief of the Bryan Police Department said, "The Texas Forensic Science Academy provides law enforcement professionals with training in the many disciplines associated with crime scene investigation. The Bryan Police Department enthusiastically supports the Academy and firmly believes that the training provided is needed throughout the forensic community. Rebecca Wendt, who currently serves as a Crime Scene Technician with our agency is scheduled to be one of the first graduates of the Academy, and is excelling in the field due to the training she has received. This is a unique program not just in the State of Texas but the nation. It is our intent to continue to endorse and support the program."

Edwards also secured \$200,000 to help the Brazos County Sheriff's Department improve coordination between the police department, fire department, EMS, and other emergency personnel by upgrading vital communications technology. This will ensure quicker response times and more open lines of communication between departments.

"I believe we have an obligation to work closely with local law enforcement to protect our families. This new equipment will help our officers respond more quickly to emergency calls with the information they need to protect our families," said Edwards, a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Brazos County Sheriff Chris Kirk said, "We are thankful to Congressman Edwards and his staff for this needed funding, and appreciate his support of Brazos County Law Enforcement."

The bill must still pass the Senate and be signed by the President.